

THE FERNWERK



The Fernwerk (literally “remote division”), also sometimes called the “echo division”, emanates from the German Romantic organ, and is played from the consoles of the main instrument.

It consists of a set of 659 pipes located in a case that is almost invisible, unlike the main organ, in the high gallery in the north arm of the transept.

The 1903 Kuhn organ already had a Fernwerk located under the vaulting of the main nave, at the transept crossing. By a fortunate combination of circumstances, it was possible to recover and reuse all the pipework from a Kuhn tubular-pneumatic instrument dating from 1902, so contemporary with the

THE FERNWERK IN THE HIGH CHAPEL OF THE TOWER ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE EAST END. Photo Claude Bormand, 2013.

MUSIC AT THE CATHEDRAL



cathedral’s first Fernwerk. That instrument came from the church in the village of Saint-George (Vaud), and was dismantled to make way for a new organ. That pipework was supplemented by two reed stops made by Fisk.

The Fernwerk was officially inaugurated in 2013.

The cathedral has hosted a variety of musical events from the early 19th century on, tentatively at first, then at a steadier pace as the years went by. However, the first organ recitals date only from the 20th century. The instrument would be accorded the place of honour thanks to the Société de Concerts de la Cathédrale de Lausanne (SCCL – Lausanne Cathedral Concert Society), founded in 1932. Today it still ensures that the great organ is widely known. It organizes the most important cycle of organ concerts in Switzerland, with around twenty-five recitals being given every year to coincide with the main religious festivals (Good Friday, Easter Sunday, Pentecost and Christmas), as well as every Friday evening

CONCERT AMBIANCE.

Photo Jérémie Leuthold, 2008.

THE FIRST INSTRUMENTS



from June to October. In the concert context, an instrument that combines tradition and innovation allows the faithful execution of four centuries of music, while at the same time being capable of exploring new fields in contemporary composition. It opens up a huge field of discoveries to music lovers.

The programme of concerts is available from the cathedral reception desk and on the website www.grandesorgues.ch

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The first references to an organ at the cathedral date back to the early 15th century. In 1529, on the eve of the Reformation, a new instrument was installed. In 1537, after Berne’s conquest of the Pays de Vaud and the adoption of Protestantism, the organ was prohibited; it was destroyed, and the pewter recovered from the smelting was perhaps sent to Berne.

In the 18th century the ban was lifted, and instruments were reintroduced into Berne’s two main churches. In this context, the organ makers Samson Scherrer, who came from Toggenburg, and Emmanuel Bossart from Berne built a great organ at their own expense for another Berne church; it was rejected

SAMSON SCHERRER’S ORGAN, 1729. STATE CA. 1900. Cathedral archives

20TH-CENTURY ORGANS



1903

1955

1965

From the end of the 19th century, in a context when archaeological considerations were given primacy, Scherrer’s organ, which obscured the unique layout of the double west gallery, was doomed. In 1902, Theodor Kuhn from Männedorf (ZH) made an instrument with 77 stops, to suit these new requirements; it was arranged in a U-shape against the side walls of the upper gallery, and was thus virtually invisible from the nave. The organ quickly showed its limitations: Its inappropriate siting meant that its sound was unsatisfactory, and its pneumatic transmission lacked precision. After long negotiations, in 1955 the Kuhn factory supplied an instrument with 93 stops distributed over four manuals and a pedalboard,

mainly installed on the upper gallery. It had no case, so as to leave the window at the back visible. To remedy this siting which was not good as regards sound, in 1965 some elements were moved to the lower gallery, four meters below. While this solution was more acceptable from an acoustic point of view, it nonetheless proved disappointing at the technical and aesthetic levels, given that equipment designed for a different place was being reused.

In 1969, an instrument for use as a continuo organ at instrumental and choral performances was installed at the east end of the nave. It was made by the Armagni and Mingot organ-building firm of Lausanne.



LAUSANNE CATHEDRAL ORGAN

Cathedral archives

THE FISK GRAND ORGAN



The 21st-century organ first saw the light of day in Lausanne. The Grand Organ opus 120 made by the American firm C. B. Fisk, Inc. (Gloucester, Massachusetts), installed in Lausanne Cathedral, is a musical and technological marvel.

- > It took ten years to design and make, and involved 150,000 hours of work and two international competitions, one for the instrument, the other for the case.
- > It consists of 7396 pipes (6737 for the main instrument and 659 for the echo manual, or Fernwerk), distributed over six manuals and a pedalboard.
- > It can be played from two consoles, a mechanical one in the gallery, and a mobile one in the nave.

- > It is the first organ in the world to have a case designed by a professional design firm, Italdesign Giugiaro, and to contain four of the main styles of organ building (French classical and symphonic, German baroque and romantic).
- > It cost over six million Swiss francs.
- > It was inaugurated in December 2003 by Jean-Christophe Geiser, the Cathedral Organist; within the Organ Committee, he was instrumental in deciding on its musical design.

A COMPLETE BREAKDOWN OF THE INSTRUMENT'S COMPOSITION IS AVAILABLE ON THE WWW.GRANDESORGUES.CH WEBSITE

EN CHAMADE PIPES.

Photo Charles Page, 2012.



THE PIPEWORK

The organ is a wind instrument. The sound comes from the passage of air into the pipes. That air is produced by two turbines located in the cathedral's two towers. Only a few dozen of the instrument's 7396 pipes are visible from the nave. The pipes can be made of metal or wood. They vary greatly in shape and dimensions since each one produces a different sound. The organ's biggest pipe is over 9 meters long and weighs nearly 400 kilograms. It is at the back of the instrument and cannot be seen.

ORGUE FISK.

Photo Charles Page, 2012.

THE MANUALS

The instrument has five manuals (keyboards): Positif de dos [Back Positive], Grand-Orgue [Great Organ], Positif expressif [Choir Organ], Récit expressif [Swell Organ], Bombarde. A sixth so-called "floating" manual can be added to any one of those five manuals at will, in order to play the Fernwerk [Echo Organ] located at the opposite end of the cathedral in the high chapel of the tower on the north side of the east end.

ELECTRONIC ADD-ONS

The instrument has a MIDI interface making it possible for example to record the organist's playing, play the organ remotely from another organ that is fitted with the same system, import musical files, or note down improvisations. The application of these new possibilities offers an innovative field for contemporary musical creation.

THE GALLERY CONSOLE

Using mechanical transmission (each note on the manuals and pedalboard is connected to the corresponding pipes).

THE EN CHAMADE PIPES

Arranged horizontally, these pipes (Trumpet 8' and Clarion 4') are the most powerful in the organ.

THE STOP KNOBS

These make it possible to select the pipes that are to speak, based on the piece that is being played. If the organ is compared to an orchestra, each stop would correspond to a different instrument.

For the case and the mobile console, see following pages.

THE CASE



Made of mahogany, it surrounds the pipes. Manufactured in Canada based on drawings by the famous designer Giorgetto Giugiaro, it symbolizes an angel with outspread wings. At its base there are luminous panels that support the instrument visually, giving it an impression of lightness in spite of the fact that it weighs more than 40 tons.

The visual aspect of the new organ and its integration into the architecture of the cathedral were constant considerations. In recent organ cases, preference has often been given to copies reflecting the musical style of the instrument. Even if that option had been chosen at Lausanne – though it was never seriously considered –, it is hard to see which style would have been used as a reference since the instrument includes four.

GIUGIARO DESIGN, SKETCH OF THE CONSOLE AND CASE, 2001.
Cathedral archives

THE MOBILE CONSOLE



The console is the instrument's control panel. It includes the manuals flanked by the stop knobs, the pedalboard, and other devices that make it possible to play the organ. The instrument has two consoles: The first is in the gallery, with mechanical transmission between the keys and the pipes, while the second mobile one located in the nave is linked to the organ by a cable and electric transmission.

The presence of a mobile console is justified for several reasons. The cathedral has to play the role of "concert hall with organ", as unlike other major Swiss cities Lausanne has no other place at its disposal where the repertoire for organ and orchestra can be showcased (Victoria Hall in Geneva, Tonhalle in Zurich, KKL in Lucerne, for example).

THE MOBILE CONSOLE.

Photo Claude Bornand, 2003.

But above all the mobile console allows those present to see the organist during concerts, because the music-loving public wants to see musicians as much as to hear them. It also makes it possible to demonstrate the working of the organ to groups, thus raising awareness of the instrument among the public at large in an "educational" manner. Finally it gives the organist the opportunity to gain a perfect appreciation of the registrations and their balance in the nave, which cannot be done from the gallery console.

